THE REIGN OF EMPEROR JOKER
48 PAGE SPECIAL!
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THE KING MUST DIE! LONG LIVE THE KING!
KELLY
KANO
ALQUIZA
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KANO
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THE REIGN OF EMPEROR JOKER
HE WHO LAUGHS
WHAT?
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LAST!
NO, I'M SERIOUS... WHAT? I DON'T GET IT.
Nooooo!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
Superman created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

AHHHH... THIS GOD GIG GETS BETTER AND BETTER EACH DAY. NOW, A BRIEF REPOSE... PERHAPS SOME COURVOISIER —
MADMAN! I'LL TEAR YOU —
NO.
PWHOOM
BOY, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU REALLY ARE, BUT I THINK YOU'VE GOT A FUTURE IN THIS ORGANIZATION.
MAYBE WE NEED NAME TAGS.
IGNITION... J-JOKER... LISTEN TO ME, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE
TH-THIS POWER YOU WIELD... IS LITERALLY TEARING THE UNIVERSE APART...
Y-YOU MUST PUT THINGS RIGHT... OR ELSE...
WE ALL DIE. EVERYONE...

WHAT?! YOU MEAN MY MUCKING ABOUT WITH REALITY ITSELF HAS --
-- REPERCUSSIONS?!
MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO HAVE THE POWER OF GOD?
I, JOKER, MAY DESTROY THE LIFE OF EVERY LIVING THING IN THE UNIVERSE!
NO DUH, TEE-HEE.
OH, VANNA!
SNAP
ON THE WAY, EMPEROR J.
HAA HOO HA.
A LITTLE GHOST BIRD ALREADY TOLD ME WHAT MY DIDDLINGS AND FIDDLINGS WERE DOING TO THE BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME --
-- AND I NEVER HEARD ANYTHING FUNNIER!
HAA HOO HA.
THAT'S WHY TOMORROW, I'M MURDERING EVERYONE IN THE UNIVERSE, FOREVER!
THINK OF IT! THE CULMINATION OF A LIFE'S WORK --
-- THE ULTIMATE EXTENSION OF THE ID UNLEASHED --
HAA HOO HA.
-- COSMOS-A-CIDE!
JOKER AM MAKING TRUTH... WRONG?
HE... HE'S GOT T'BE, HUSH PUPPY... AFTER ALL, HE IS "THE JOKER." RIGHT?
AIN'T HE?

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
THIS ISN'T A GAME ANYMORE --
YOU'RE GETTING SUPER-SWEAT ON MY ROBES. EWW.
YOU'RE TEARING APART THE FABRIC OF REALITY! NO ONE WILL SURVIVE --
--ESPECIALLY NOT YOU!
DO YOU REALLY WANT TO DIE?
SUPERMAN... I... I'M HURTING INSIDE. THE VOICES... THE VISIONS. I JUST WANT IT ALL TO STOP...
BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
STOP ME, SUPERMAN. STOP ME.
YOU HAVE THE POWER... JUST WISH IT.
END THIS AND UNDO THE DAMAGE YOU'VE DONE.
...
AND THAT WAS THE SCENE FROM MY NEW PLAY --
-- THE DAY I WHACKED EVERYTHING!
PLAYING IN ASYLUMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY!
WHOLLF!
YOU LIKE ME. YOU REALLY LIKE ME.
HANG HIM NEXT TO THE BAT. TOMORROW, THEY DIE FIRST.
AND IF ANY OF YOU HAVE ANY LOVED ONES, CALL THEM...
TOMORROW... THE LINES MAY BE TIED UP.
HAHAHA
THE ULTIMATE RIDDLE POSED...
BUT THIS IS NOT THE ANSWER THAT SUITS MY TASTE.

Why?
I stand at the apex. I am my dreams. I've slain my enemies and become Empress of all there is.
So why can't I stop thinking about him and his wide eyes and the schoolboy way he looks at -- looks through me?
Why have I let a condemned criminal steal my heart --?
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, HAMHOCKS.
EMPEROR JOKER!
DON'T BE CROSS AT ME FOR SNOOPING, BUT THE DRIPPINGS FROM YOUR BRAIN BAG ARE ALL OVER THE ROOM, FLOATING LIKE BIG CAPTIONS...
LOVE YOUR FONT. A+ FOR PENMANSHIP.
BUT I AIN'T TICKED -- NOT EVEN TOCKED! I JUST WANTED TO ASSURE YOU THAT YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE DUMPING SPITCURL LAD FOR MOI.
SURE I CAN BE DIFFICULT -- I EAT CRACKERS IN BED AND I NEVER PUT THE CAP BACK ON THE RAT POISON, AND OCCASIONALLY I'LL SNAP YOUR NECK TO PROVE A POINT --
-- BUT YOU WON THE LOTTERY, KID. YOU'RE CHICK SUPREME OF THE UNIVERSE, AND IT'S GOING TO KEEP YOU ALIVE.
REALLY?
SURE... I CAN'T REPOPULATE THE COSMOS ALL BY MY LONESOME.
LI'L JOKER JUNIOR NEEDS A MAMA! PICTURE IT --
ME, YOU, A BOX OF CHEAP WINE AND TEN THOUSAND YEARS OF DANCING DEAD SEXY BABY. YEAH!
SOUNDS... DIVINE. REALLY.
Can you tell what I'm thinking now?
Can you?

HARDLY ONE OF OUR "WORLD'S FINEST" MOMENTS, IS IT?
...
SORRY. I KNOW YOU CAN'T ANSWER ME. BUT I'M NOT ACCUSTOMED TO... HELPLESSNESS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF.
HOW DO WE STOP A PSYCHOTIC WITH THE POWERS OF A GOD?
...
KLIK... K... KLIK...!
KLIK... KLIK... KLIK...
MORSE CODE. HE LEFT YOU A JAW.
YOU REALLY ARE THE BEST, AREN'T YOU? THE BEST THAT EVER WAS.
OKAY, BATMAN. SAVE THE DAY. TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

K...
KLK...
KLK...
K...L...
L—
?
KILL HIM?
THAT'S YOUR PLAN?
BATMAN... I—
THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER WAY. YOU MUST HAVE ANOTHER IDEA.
GOOD LORD.
WHAT HAS HE DONE TO YOU?
FWOOP FWAP FWOOP
WHAT'S THAT?
BATMAN?
BRUCE!

I CAN'T THINK OVER THE SOUND OF TEARING FLESH AND CRACKING BONE AND MY OWN CURSING FOR HAVING EARS THAT CAN HEAR A FLEA LEAP.
EACH FEATHER STROKE AGAINST HIS SKIN IS LIKE SANDPAPER. EACH BITE CRISP THUNDER. THE MOUTHLESS SCREAM --
AAIIIGHHHHH!
I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER HEARD A HUMAN BEING MAKE SUCH SOUNDS -- AND THEN I REALIZE WITH BLOOD-RED CLARITY HOW WRONG I AM.
HE'S GONE THROUGH THIS EVERY NIGHT SINCE THE MADNESS BEGAN. EVERY NIGHT, HE'S TORTURED TO DEATH. THE ONLY CONSTANT IN JOKER'S NIGHTMARE.
YEARRRRGHH!
EVERY NIGHT.
THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO KILL A MAN.
LISTENING TO MY FRIEND DISAPPEAR IN CHUNKS DOWN THE DIGESTIVE TRACTS OF DEMONS...
I GO THROUGH THEM ALL.

MEANWHILE...
IT BOGGLES THE MIND -- EVEN A MIND AS LABYRINTHINE AS MY OWN..
CAN THE EMPEROR TRULY DO WHAT HE CLAIMS?
AT THIS POINT, ENIGMA, THE JOKER DESTROYING THE UNIVERSE IS ABOUT AS TOUGH AS YOU PULLING ON SOCKS. IT'S A DONE DEAL, UNLESS...
NOT A HOAX, IGNITION. NOT A DREAM. SHOULD THIS COME TO PASS --
BIZARRO FEEL HOT_ SOMEONE NOT HOLD ME?
HOLD YOURSELF, FOOL. WHAT MUST BE DONE?
FINALLY. I WAS CERTAIN EVEN THE DIMMEST OF YOU WOULD REALIZE YOUR SALVATION LAY WITH ME -- BUT I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE SO BLASTED LONG --
SILENCE, INSECT. YOU ARE ONLY USEFUL TO ONE WITH VISION. UNDERSTANDING. I AM THAT ONE.
SURE. WHATEVER YOU SAY, BOSS... AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE GENIUS WHO SIGNED ON WITH JOKER VOLUNTARILY.
MY DEAR, PLEASE, I KNOW THIS IS DIFFICULT TO PROCESS --
BUT I CAN'T. I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING BUT THIS!
HOW CAN I CONVINCE HIM OF ANYTHING WHEN I DON'T BELIEVE --
THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO ACT, NOW WON'T YOU? LUCKY YOU. HE'S A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE AND NOT MUCH OF A CRITIC.
I KNOW THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW, BETWEEN US, Y'KNOW?
I AIN'T BABE-IN-WAITING ANYMORE. YOU'RE ALL OMNI-POTENT. I UNDERSTAND RELATIONSHIPS HAVE THEIR BUMPS, AND I'M OKAY WITH THAT... BUT I GOTTA ASK.
WH-WHY ARE YOU GONNA DESTROY THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING?

YOU POOR, MIXED-UP KID. IT ALL SOUNDS SO BIG AND SCARY, DOESN'T IT? WORDS LIKE "GIGICIDE" AND "OBLIVION" AND 401K?
LET'S SEE IF I CAN EASE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE PEANUT OF A BRAIN.
THE WORLD -- SCRATCH THAT -- THE WHOLE WAD AS I'VE COME TO UNDERSTAND IT THROUGH INTIMATE AND INAPPROPRIATE CONTACT, IS SICK. FLAWED. BROKEN.
THERE IS NOT, NEVER WAS, NEVER WILL BE A MASTER PLAN, A DIVINE ORDER, OR A GENTLE WHITE-BEARDED SHEPHERD WHO WILL INSTILL HARMONY 'N THE WEE BAIRNS OF THE GALAXIAL HOST.
THE WHOLE THING IS ONE BIG BOTCH JOB.
AND WE'RE ALL SUFFERING FOR IT. BE IT BEHIND A DESK OR IN A STRAIGHT JACKET -- EVERYONE FEELS THE PAIN OF THIS LIFE. LISTEN..
HELP ME! I AM IN PAIN!
THAT WAS YOU.
I SPEAK FOR MY KINGDOM, WHAT CAN I SAY?
TOMORROW.. WHEN I UNLEASH MY MOJO AND GO FOR THE BIG KILL-A-GO-GO, MY UTTER DESTRUCTION OF ALL THINGS THAT ARE WILL HAVE A HEALING EFFECT.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, CHAOS WILL BE REPLACED BY ORDER.
THE SCREAMING AND THE BLOOD AND EXPLODING SKULLS AND SUCH ARE ALL ME. A THANK-YOU TO THE FANS.
BUT YOU SEE, HARL? I'M FIXING EVERYTHING. I'M LEAVING BEHIND A CLEAN, QUIET UNIVERSE.
A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE LIKE ME.. WON'T EVER COME INTO EXISTENCE.

BUT DO I HAVE TO DIE TOO, MR. J?
ALL WE BEEN THROUGH ALL I DONE FOR YOU.
I KINDA THOUGHT, I DONT KNOW -- IT MIGHT COUNT FOR SOMETHING.
YOU KOOKY KID -- C'MERE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, HARLEY IT SHOULD COUNT FOR ALL YOUR TEARS OF SERVICE...
" YOU GET THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE FOR ARMAGEDDON.
"SAY GOODNIGHT, HARLEY."

I ALWAYS WANTED MY DAME IN LIGHTS.
HEH. EVEN IN A MOMENT OF ABJECT SACCHARIN, I STILL GOT IT
WELL THEN! ON TO THE CLUBBING OPEN OF THE SEVENTH BABY SEAL. HOW TO BEGIN?
THERE ARE SO MANY TOOLS AVAILABLE TO US. GLOBAL INGESTION VIA DUST MITE?
SPONTANEOUS HUMAN FLAGELLATION WITH UNSPOOLED CARROT TOP VIDEOS?
TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL MARATHON --?
CHOOM!

AND THENCE, MASTER, YOUR WILL IS SERVED.
I ONLY PRAY, HUMBLY, THAT I MAY RETURN TO YOUR SERVICE SOON...
DAMN. IF THAT'S NOT THE LUCKIEST SHOT EVER!
LUCK HAS BEEN EXCISED FROM THE EQUATION, SKORCH.
THE "EMPEROR" INDICATED ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THAT HE DID NOT CREATE IGNITION AND WAS DUMBFOUNDED BY HIS EXISTENCE.
THEREFORE, I SURMISED THAT HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO READ HIS MIND OR SENSE HIS PRESENCE, ALLOWING FOR A CLOSE-RANGE ATTACK TARGETED BY SKIZM.
AND I WAS RIGHT.
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN, NO?
YES. COMRADES. TODAY, WE HAVE NOT ONLY SAVED THE EARTH BUT ALSO POSITIONED OURSELVES AS ITS DE FACTO RULERS.
NOW BEFORE THE SQUABBLING OVER LAND RIGHTS AND SUCH ENSUES, ALLOW ME TO PROPOSE A LOGICAL POWER STRUCTURE --
IGNITION, SKIZM, AND I SHALL FORM A NEW TRIUMVIRATE -- THAT'S THREE EQUAL RULERS, B-ZARRO -- THEN --
..
HELL-OO? AM I SPEAKING TOO QUICKLY HERE? EYES ON ME, PLEASE

HNNNGH
DON'T POP ANYTHING
YOU CAN'T BREAK OUT. LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE HERE, THE RESTRAINTS ARE MAGIC. YOU HAVE NO POWER OVER MAGIC.
LOIS?
THAT'S "EMPRESS LANE" TO YOU, CRIMINAL.
EMPRESS OF EVERYTHING.
EMPRESS OF NOTHING.
SUPERMAN. CAN YOU STOP HIM?
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE.
I DON'T KNOW. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU CAN.
I KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR. BUT IT'S HOW I FEEL. IT'S WHAT I KNOW...
I DON'T BELIEVE IN YOU.
THEN IT'S ALL OVER.
I DON'T BELIEVE IN YOU. WHICH IS WHY I'M HERE, ON MY KNEES, BEGGING YOU
TO MAKE ME BELIEVE.
MAKE ME BELIEVE IN YOU. PLEASE

WHAMM
HNNGH!
OHH!
ET TU, LOIS?
A GUY TURNS HIS BACK FOR THIRTEEN SECONDS SO HE CAN FIGURE OUT AN ATYPICAL WAY OF OBLITERATING EVERY MOLECULE OF EXISTENCE --
-- AND HIS CREW GOES NATIVE ON HIM!
WHICH PART OF "JOKER IS GOD" DON'T YOU MOUTH-BREATHERS UNDERSTAND?! YOU ARE NOTHING! I AM EVERYTHING!
I WIN!
POOM
SUPERMAN!
SORRY, LO, BUT HE REALLY SHOULD'VE KNOWN BETTER THAN TO RUB ANOTHER MAN'S RHUBARB --
HE WAS TRYING TO HELP US -- SAVE US!
UM... YOU REALLY HAVEN'T BEEN PAYING ATTENTION, HAVE YOU?
PERHAPS IF I EXPLAIN IN THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE...

I'M HOME WRECKING, ACROSS THE UNIVERSE! TEARING UP THE CARPETING AND MANGLING THE VERSE!
THE BLOOD IS GONNA RAIN LIKE RAIN! THE GALAXY WILL SCREAM IN PAIN AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN --
UNTIL IT ALL GOES BBBBBBT!
MEANWHILE, MY TWO FAVORITE TOYS GET TO PLAY ALONG IN THE FUN!
PICK A COUNTRY ANY COUNTRY, AND I'LL MAKE EVERYONE THERE DOODLE RAZOR BLADES
IT'S REALLY HAPPENING WHY DIDN'T I BELIEVE IT SOONER -- GCHH
KRKKT
OOPS! DARN FOREIGN PARTS, NO STRENGTH TO THE --
SCULPT?
MRRRRNB
THERE'S SOMETHING IN MY SHOE

pop!
THAT'S GONNA LEAVE A MARK.

HOLD ON, LOIS! I'VE GOT YOU --
LOIS. YOUR BREATHING --
I THOUGHT ≠KAFF≠ YOU WERE ≠KOFF≠
YOUR RIBS... YOU PUNCTURED A LUNG -- INTERNAL BLEEDING
CLARK
≠HEART I HAVE TO -
CLARK!
YOU CALLED ME CLARK
TH-THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD
SUDDENLY, EVERYTHING WAS MEANINGLESS
WITHOUT YOU IN MY WORLD THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE
LOIS
THANK YOU FOR GETTING MY LIFE BACK
EVEN IF IT IS JUST FOR A MOMENT
≠AHEM≠

YOU MADE MY FACE GO EXPLODEY AND SWAM UP THROUGH MY GUTS!
I FELT THAT!
KLUNCK
HELLO, BUMPY LANDING! WHAT HAPPENED OUT — OH. THANKS FOR THE RIDE, CLYDE. I PROMISE I WON'T FORGET OUR LITTLE AGREEMENT —
ASSUMING ANYONE LIVES LONG ENOUGH TO CALL IN THE MARKER.
Y'KNOW, THAT'S HOW IT HAPPENS. I GUESS. ONE DAY, YOU'RE "IMP OF THE YEAR" TWO MILLENNIA RUNNING
AND THE NEXT, I'M GONNA DIE PENNILESS AND POWERLESS IN A PEON DIMENSION
WELL, NO. TOTALLY POWERLESS. JUST ENOUGH JUICE FOR ONE LAST... GOOF...

LOIS
I'M SORRY. SO SORRY. I HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING I HAD. AND NOTHING. NOTHING.
NO. THAT'S A LIE. I HELD BACK. LORD KNOWS IF IT WOULD HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE, BUT I COULDN'T KILL --
-- AND NOW I'VE LOST.
FOURTH AND NOTHING AND WE'RE DEEP IN IT, EH--?
WHO -- MXYZPTLK!
KEEP IT IN YER SOCKETS, KID! CLOSE THEM EYES AN' OPEN THE EARS! TIME'S SHORTER THAN ME RIGHT NOW!
I KNOW. THIS ALL MY FAULT. AND FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I'M SORRY ON A BIBLICAL SCALE.
BUT IT AIN'T OVER UNTIL ALL REALITY IS REDUCED TO A SINGLE POINT OF INFINITE GRAVITY, SO YOU STILL HAVE A FEW MOMENTS TO FIGURE OUT THE RULES --
RULES? UNLESS MAKING JOKER SAY H.S NAME BACKWARDS WILL WORK, THERE ARE NO RULES.
THE ONLY MAN WHO MIGHT KNOW IF THERE WERE IS DEAD AGAIN
FOCUS, KID. RULES. RULES.
THERE'S ONLY ONE OPTION. ONE WAY TO END THIS --
..AND IT REALLY IS GAME OVER.
YOU'RE NOT THINKING!
JOKER COULD OBLITERATE YOU WITH A THOUGHT, BUT HE DOESN'T! WHY NOT? TORMENT, FUN, RULES!
WHAT ARE HIS RULES?
"HIS RULES?!" HE'S MAD. HOW CAN I COMPREHEND ANYTHING HE'S DONE, OR WILL DO? THERE'S NO TIME LEFT.
YOU BELIEVE THAT...
COME ON, SUPES. EARN DAT'S. SHOW ME YOU AIN'T AS DUMB AS YOU LOOK.

SO THIS GUY WALKS INTO A BAR AND SAYS --

OW!

MY HUMOR IT IS SUBTLE. LIKE THIS ODE TO EARTH DAY.

FLICK

HAHAHAHAHAHA

KRAKOOM

Noooo!

JOKER!

OOH! ARE THOSE THE EYES OF A MAN DRIVEN TO THE BRINK? OR JUST A MAN STUCK FOR THREE HOURS AT THE D.M.V..?

I DO DECLARE! I'M BEIN' SUPERMANHANDLED!

GO ON, PEACHES. I WON'T STOP YA. MAKE THE BAD GOD BE DEAD.

CLARK

DON'T THINK. DO IT. CLARK

YGLLCH! THAT'S IT NOW IT'S COMING J-JUST A LITTLE MORE --

OH MY YOU'VE DONE THIS YKAKKF BEFORE, HAVEN'T YOU? I CAN TEL.. SUCH A YGCHH GENTLE TOUCH..

NO. NOT AGAIN EVER. I'LL FIND A WAY --
WHAMM
STILL PUNCHING A TIME CARD AND PLAYING NICE NICE AFTER ALL THIS?
YOU REALLY ARE TOO STUPID TO LIVE. YOU KNOW THIS, YES?
THERE ARE RULES WE ALL LIVE BY, JOKER' THERE'S NO AVOIDING THEM --
ONLY RULE ROUN' THESE PARTS, STRANGER --
-- IS JOKER MAKES THE RULES!
THAT AND YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE ORANGE JUICE AFTER BRUSHING YECHH

WHAT A GYP! I THOUGHT YOU HAD A HEART OF GOLD! I WOULDN'T GET THREE-FIFTY AT THE BUTCHER SHOP FOR THIS TRIPE!
DON'T WORRY
IT'S ONLY EXCRUCIATING-LY PAINFUL UNTIL YOU DIE.
HGGCH!
S-SUN... HARK! PLEASE... NEED THE STRENGTH.
DRINK IT UP WHILE IT LASTS.
OL' SOL'S GOOD FOR ABOUT ANOTHER THIRTY SECONDS BEFORE IT BLOWS OUT.
CHOMP!
MMM HEROIC AND TASTY TOO
RULES... RULES... WHY COULDN'T I GET THE -
RULES. HEH
WHITE ELEPHANTS
EH? SPEAK UP, SUNSHINE! I DON'T WANT TO MISS AN IOTA OF YOUR PRE-BUCKET-KICKING MENTAL BREAKDOWN —
-- AND THE COSMIC GAS WHISTLING THROUGH YOUR CHEST CAVITY IS DROWNING YOU OUT!
WHITE ELEPHANTS THE JOKE — "DON'T THINK OF WHITE ELEPHANTS."
AND IT'S ALL YOU CAN THINK OF? WHITE ELEPHANTS

-- THAT'S NOT A JOKE! IT'S A SHORT-TERM MNEMONIC COGNITION GAG!
PHILISTINES EVERYWHERE I GO --
-OW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU PEOPLE --
Y-YOU D-DON'T GET IT
THERE, HAPPY? NO MORE ELEPHANTS. DOUBLE POOF, NO MORE COLOR WH-- EITHER! IT NO LONGER EXISTS, NOT EVEN AS A CONCEPT!
NOW SHUT UP AND CROAK!
N-NOT THOSE -- ELEPHANTS
...YOUR ELEPHANT. FOR ALL YOUR POWER... THE BRAIN GAMES YOUR UNIVERSE CAN'T HAVE MEANING...
WITHOUT A BATMAN.
WHATCHOO TALKIN' 'BOUT WILLIS?
YOU THINK BECAUSE YOU HAVE CONTROL, NO RULES APPLY. BUT EVEN AS A G-GOD, BATMAN STILL HAS POWER OVER YOU.
WH-WHY HAVEN'T YOU ERASED H-HIM YET? M-MAYBE YOU CAN'T.
OR MAYBE IT WAS MORE FUN USING BATSPAM AS MY PERSONAL CHEW TOY. WHEN WOULD I GET TO THE BUT CROCHETING AND SKIN FLAYING IF I'D WIPED HIM OUT OF EXISTENCE?
SQUOOSH
OR MAYBE I WAS WAITING UNTIL THE BIG FINALE.
HATE TO KICK YOU IN THE LAST-SECOND GAMBIT, SUPERMOOK...
BUT THE HUNTSMAN DIDN'T CHOP OPEN THE WOLF. GRANNY'S STILL DINNER --
-- AND THE UNIVERSE IS OFFICIALLY WITHOUT A BATMAN.

WITHOUT A WHO?
GONE DEAF? I SAID BA --
I SAID "BATMAN"? I ERASED BATMAN. I SHOULDN'T EVEN KNOW THE WORD --
BATMAN?!
WHY IS THERE A DEAD BATMAN CLINGING TO URANUS?!
THERE IS NO BATMAN! I WILL IT!
I WILL HIM TO BEGONE BE FORGOTTEN BE DEAD BE BOPPED FOREVER!
YOU DON'T SAY?
WHY ARE YOU SMILING? YOU HAVE A PARKING GARAGE WHERE YOUR LUNGS SHOULD BE. WHY ARE YOU --
OH. THAT'S NOT FUNNY.

HEY KANO! WHICH PART OF "BATMAN NO LONGER EXISTS" DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?!
¿HABLO "NO BATMAN?"
EVEN WITH THE UNIVERSE AT YOUR WHIM, YOU CAN'T DO IT.
YOU CAN'T GET BATMAN OUT OF YOUR HEAD. CAN'T ERASE HIM —
— BECAUSE HE'S JUST TOO BIG. BIGGER THAN YOU'LL EVER BE.
NO NO NO! I'M GOD, HE'S A TYPE-A IN FANCY DRESS! BATMAN DOES NOT RANK!
SEE! GONE! SENT TO THE CORNFIELD! OFF TO THE RACES! I STILL GOT IT!
IF YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS FORGET ONE MAN...
...HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY MAINTAIN CONTROL OF ALL THAT POWER? HOW CAN YOU SMASH PLANETS? UNRAVEL THE SKY?
HEY, WAIT — YOU — NO
OR TEAR OUT MY HEART? ANSWER...

YOU CAN'T
YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING...
BECAUSE IT'S HIS WORLD. YOU'RE JUST AN ANNOYANCE IN IT.
BUT I'M EMPEROR. I'M EMPEROR SEE? I'VE GOT THE NEW CLOTHES TO PROVE IT
SERIOUSLY STOP.
I DON'T WANT MY MEDICINE

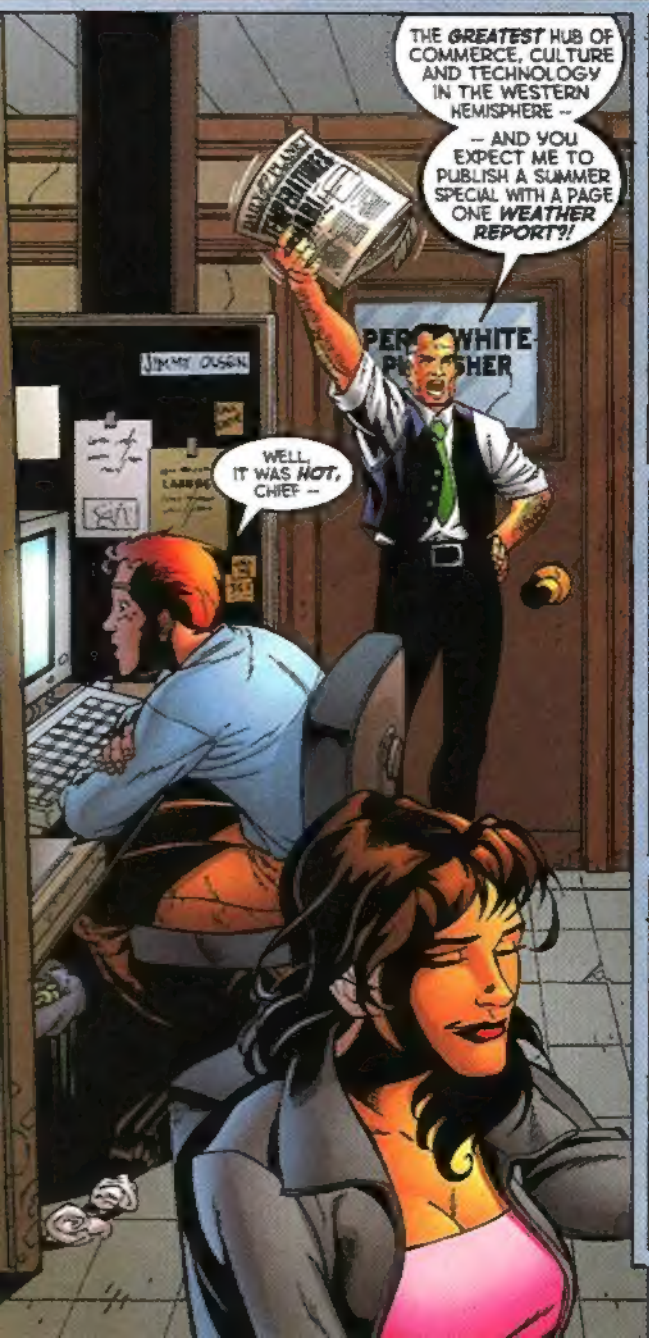
CALL ME HUMBLE... . BUT IN THE FIVE HOURS IT TOOK US TO RECONSTRUCT ALL OF SPACE-TIME --
-- I THINK WE KICKED THE OLD RECORD IN THE CAN!
I GUESS WE DID. THE WHOLE UNIVERSE. I STILL CAN'T FATHOM IT.
THE DAMAGE DONE BY THE JOKER WAS GRAVE INDEED, KAL-EL. BUT YOU BROKE HIS HOLD ON REALITY BEFORE IT BECAME IRREVERSIBLE.
"ALL THE UNIVERSE WRITTEN ON THE KNEECAP OF A FLEA" OR WHATEVER. PLENTY OF RAW MATERIAL LEFT TO DUCT TAPE THIS BACKWATER DIMENSION BACK TOGETHER.
SOON AS CASPER GIVES THE WORD, TIME TICKS FROM THE POINT OF DISRUPTION, EVERYTHING BACK TO NORMAL, NO ONE THE WISER --
EVERYTHING? YOU DID SAY EVERYTHING, YES? BECAUSE IF ONE BLADE OF GRASS IS OUT OF LINE. ONE PERSON TURNS INTO A CHICKEN OR SPROUTS A THIRD EYE, I SWEAR THE NEXT TIME YOU VISIT --
-- YOU'LL HAVE TO SAY YOUR NAME BACKWARDS THROUGH A WIRED JAW! ARE WE CLEAR?
B-BACCARAT... SO I GUESS I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT THE SURPRISE -- LEFT FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY --
WHAT?! MXY --
KLTPZYXM!
I SUPERVISED THE IMP'S WORK. HE DID NOTHING OF CONSEQUENCE WHILE I WAS WITH HIM --
SURE. PUT THAT IN WRITING, SPECTRE
-- BUT DESPITE THE RECONSTRUCTION, THERE ARE... CASUALTIES TO ADDRESS.

BRUCE?
MXYZPTLK IS GONE. EVERYTHING HAS BEEN *RESTORED*. WE CAN GO *HOME* NOW AND
BRUCE?
WE DID THE *RIGHT* THING, YOU KNOW
NOT KILLING HIM

I KNOW. IT WOULDN'T HAVE COUNTED. WHEN IT HAPPENS..
..I WANT IT TO COUNT. I WANT IT TO BE REAL.
BRUCE, YOU DON'T MEAN THAT --
DON'T TELL ME WHAT I MEAN! DON'T LOOK AT ME AND THINK THINGS AND -- AND --
I CAN'T CLOSE MY EYES, CLARK. I CAN'T CLOSE THEM BECAUSE I SEE IT ALL OF IT.
BRUCE?
HE CANNOT HEAR YOU, KAL-EL. HE WILL NOT HEAR YOU.
BATMAN HAS SUFFERED VIOLATION AND INJUSTICE AGAINST HIS PERSON THAT NO ONE IN HISTORY HAS ENDURED --
I CAN'T CLOSE MY EYES BECAUSE I SEE HIM. AND I AND HE PIECES AND PARTS CAN'T CLOSE
EACH DEATH CRY, EACH HORROR RESONATES WITHIN HIM. DARK VIBRATIONS... MERCILESS AS THE JOKER'S ATTENTIONS...
AND THEY HAVE BROKEN HIM. THE MAN YOU KNOW... IS LOST. ONLY PAIN REMAINS.
NO. HE'LL REBOUND. HE ALWAYS DOES. HE'S THE STRONGEST MAN I KNOW --
BUT HE IS JUST A MAN, KAL-EL. JUST A MAN. WHEN STRONG MEN ARE PUSHED UNTIL THEY BREAK.
HE WILL NOT SURVIVE THIS.

WE JUST PUT THE UNIVERSE BACK TOGETHER, FOR PITY'S SAKE!
DO SOMETHING!
I CANNOT! HE HAS KISSED DEATH COUNTLESS TIMES. HE HAS SEEN – HE HAS BEEN TO THE END OF THE UNIVERSE, KAL-EL! SUCH MEMORIES CANNOT SIMPLY BE ERASED! THEY MUST BE EXCISED! TAKEN!
AND THAT, I CANNOT DO...
"...UNLESS SOMEONE IS WILLING TO CARRY THEM IN HIS STEAD.
"SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE GRAVITY OF STEALING A MAN'S MEMORIES... HIS PAIN.
...
I KNOW WHAT YOU'D SAY IF YOU WERE LISTENING, BRUCE. BUT IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS. NOT FOR YOU...
AND ESPECIALLY NOT BECAUSE OF HIM
DAMN YOUR PAIN, BRUCE. WE NEED YOU TOO MUCH.
I NEED YOU. I'M SORRY
DO IT
DONE. MERCY ON BOTH YOUR SOULS, KAL-EL. MERCY.

OLSEN! GET ONE OF THE MACHINISTS FROM THE PLANET UP HERE WITH THE BIGGEST PAIR OF PLIERS THEY HAVE --
-- AND SOMEBODY PINCH ME WITH IT, CAUSE I'M STUCK IN A NIGHTMARE!
METROPOLIS

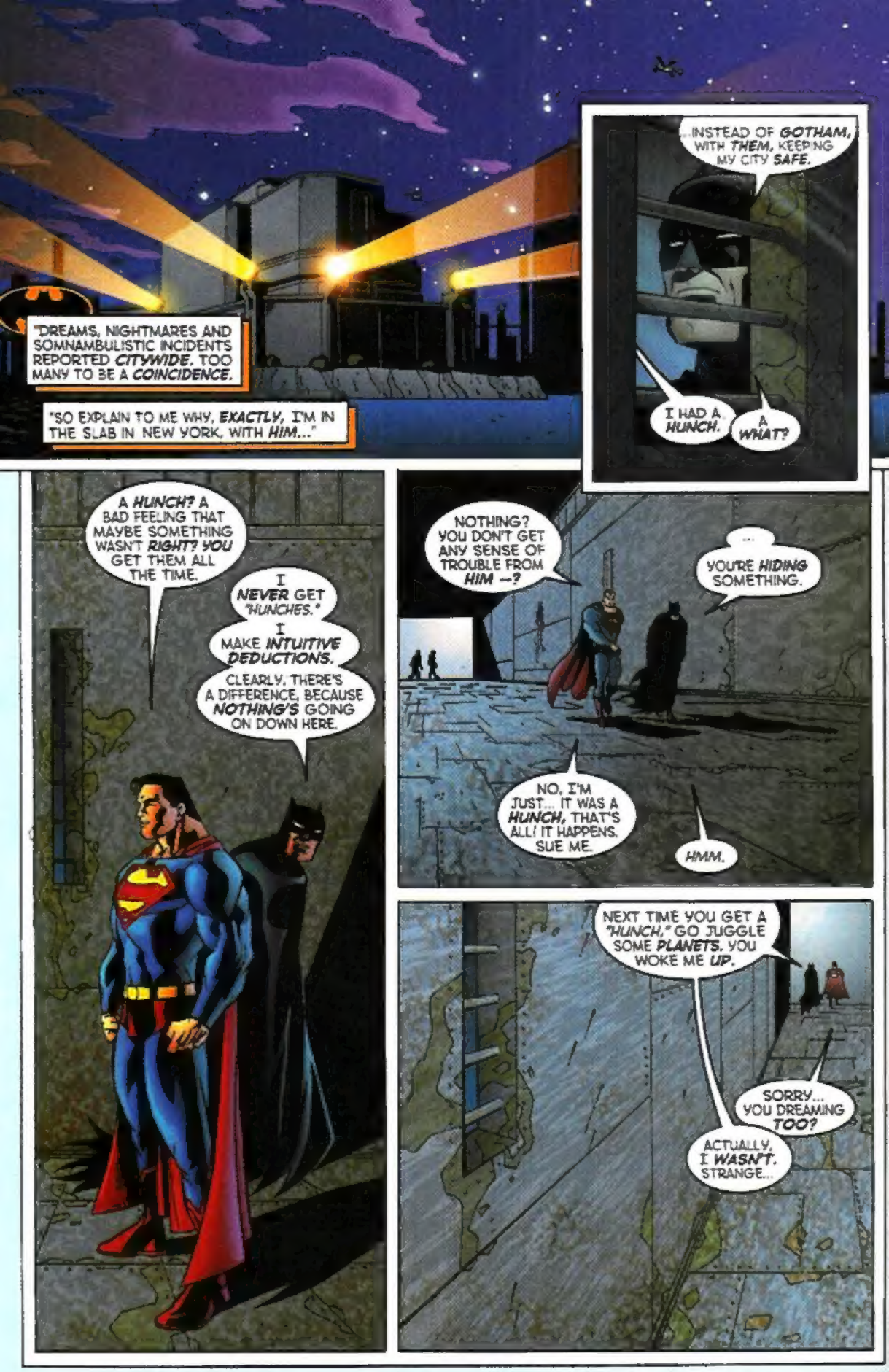

THE GREATEST HUB OF COMMERCE, CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE --
-- AND YOU EXPECT ME TO PUBLISH A SUMMER SPECIAL WITH A PAGE ONE WEATHER REPORT?!
WELL, IT WAS HOT, CHIEF --
JIMMY OLSEN

ANYONE THAT AGREES WITH OLSEN CAN JOIN HIM ON THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT -- THE REST OF YOU -- GET ME COPY!
SLAM
PERRY HAS A POINT...
...BUT FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE STORY TO SQUEEZE...

SERIOUS. ONLY THING IN MY HEAD WAS THIS RECURRING DREAM I HAD ABOUT TAGGING ALONG WITH SUPERMAN --
-- ONLY IT WASN'T QUITE HIM. BAD SKIN, HE TALKED FUNNY, AND SAID, "ME AM YOUR BIGGEST ENEMY" A LOT --

WEIRD, HUH -- LOIS?
HELLO. RUDE.

ARE YOU INSANE?!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA, LOIS...
THE NEWSROOM WAS PACKED! JIMMY WAS RAMBLING AND -- WHAT IF SOME-ONE SAW?
YOU WAIT UNTIL MY HUSBAND FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS, TOUGH GUY!
THEN HE'LL PUT A MILD-MANNERED BEATIN' ON YOUR --
CLARK? WHAT IS IT? YOU... LOOK LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO CRY OR SOMETHING. ARE YOU OKAY?
I... YEAH, I'M PERFECT. JUST HAD A ROUGH DAY...
... AND I WANTED TO GET A DOSE OF REALITY.


"DREAMS, NIGHTMARES AND SOMNAMBULISTIC INCIDENTS REPORTED CITYWIDE. TOO MANY TO BE A COINCIDENCE.
"SO EXPLAIN TO ME WHY, EXACTLY, I'M IN THE SLAB IN NEW YORK, WITH HIM..."
...INSTEAD OF GOTHAM, WITH THEM, KEEPING MY CITY SAFE.
I HAD A HUNCH.
A WHAT?
A HUNCH? A BAD FEELING THAT MAYBE SOMETHING WASN'T RIGHT? YOU GET THEM ALL THE TIME.
I NEVER GET "HUNCHES."
I MAKE INTUITIVE DEDUCTIONS.
CLEARLY, THERE'S A DIFFERENCE, BECAUSE NOTHING'S GOING ON DOWN HERE.
NOTHING? YOU DON'T GET ANY SENSE OF TROUBLE FROM HIM --?
...
YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING.
NO, I'M JUST... IT WAS A HUNCH, THAT'S ALL! IT HAPPENS. SUE ME.
HMM.
NEXT TIME YOU GET A "HUNCH," GO JUGGLE SOME PLANETS. YOU WOKE ME UP.
SORRY... YOU DREAMING TOO?
ACTUALLY, I WASN'T. STRANGE...

"I HAD THE BEST NIGHT'S SLEEP OF MY ENTIRE LIFE."
ROREPME REKOJ... ROREPME REKOJ...
ROREPME REKOJ... ROREPME REKOJ...
ROREPME REKOJ...
THE END